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THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

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Issued In the Interest of The Parish Ministry

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VOL. XIV

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THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

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the editor's page

"My Cup Runneth Over"

We have always had some misgivings that one issue of The Quarterly arrives on ministers' desks at the height of the busy Advent Season. We trust, at least, that it gets filed for reference in more leisurely periods. We trust, also, that you may pause long enough to let us wish you all the joys and satisfactions which Christmastide can bring.

Some years ago, we saw a movie based on George Martin's novel, "For Our Vines Have Tender Grapes." It was the story of an immigrant farm family which settled in our middle west, and especially of their little nine-year-old girl, Selma. In the story, we follow Selma's intimate involvement in the family's trials and deprivations. But presently comes a day when her father takes from the sheepfold a newborn lamb and places it in her arms. "This is for you," he says. She looks up into his face, her eyes sparkling, full of delight and surprise, and she says, "For me? For my very own?" She looks back at the lamb and once again up into his face and says, quite simply and sincerely, "My cup runneth over."

We still regard this as one of our most unforgettable moments at the movies. For some reason, it always comes back to us at this season of the year, and it gives us opportunity to emphasize the hope that your cup may be full and running over as you and your people herald the birthday of the Lamb of God.

This Issue . . .

This issue of The Quarterly reflects the continuing influence of the International Congregational Council at Hartford last summer. Mr. Rouner's article indicates one of the by-products of such councils, and Dr. White's substantive address on religion in America, presented at the Council, is by popular request, here published in its entirety.

We direct your attention also to the request made by the editor of the Department of Theology to share with him and with your fellow ministers your experiences in conducting theological discussion groups. We believe The Quarterly can become an increasingly significant medium for the exchange of such information to the mutual profit of our whole fellowship. Will you help us make it so?

Editorial Offices Move

After the publication of this issue, the editorial offices of The Quarterly will return to 287 Fourth Avenue. Manuscripts and letters of comment should be sent to the Department of the Ministry at that address.

Fathers and Brethren:

You have come to minister. I would like to chat with you about being ministered unto. Because pastors spend their lives ministering they often fumble and grope when a situation arises in which they need the services of a *pastor pastorum.* It is good to reflect that the relationship "like to that above" which binds pastor and people can and often does embrace pastors and those whose duty it is to be their ministers. But it involves a reversal of posture which it is sometimes difficult for us to make.

Twice in my lifetime since my ordination I have had occasion to become a member of a church of which I was not the Pastor. I confess, at first I found myself assuming the role of a critical spectator, a role encouraged by seminary homiletics classes in which it was our duty to evaluate one another's sermons. Professional pride inclines one in this situation to meditate, not on his sins, but on how much better he would do the pastoring than the one who is doing it. I was saved from this demon by the saying of a wise old deacon, a much holier man than I, who once said to me, "I've been listening to preaching for 75 years, and I never yet heard a man who couldn't preach better than I can live." Now, some of the best hours of my life are those when, with my family, I sit in a pew as a member of the household of God to which I belong and am blessed by the Word from the mouths of those whom the Father has called to be my ministers.

The Church of God is so ordered that nobody, not even the Pastor of a congregation, need be pastorless. The ministries of brother Pastors, in neighboring churches, in Conference and Synod offices, and in the national offices of our fellowship can be to Pastors what their ministry is to their people.

First, there is the kind of ministry whose origin is with the Pastor.

In the local Church this includes the ministry of preaching, of program building, of leadership in Christian Education, Stewardship, and Social Action. It also includes that often spoken but not always understood ministry called "Pastoral Care." This is not so much a group of tasks as it is an inner concern growing out of the shared love of Christ which results in tasks eagerly done, the grace which makes the pains and joys of the people those of the Pastor's own flesh.

In Conferences this ministry also involves the ministry of the Word, of leadership in institutional life and work. But it includes Pastoral Care, too. Pastors are not enough aware that their Conference and Synod Ministers have their needs at heart in a truly pastoral way. Sometimes the same critical spirit which makes it difficult for you to be the Pastor to some members of your congregation who will not let you into their lives —this same spirit can make it hard for your *pastor pastorum* to be your minister.

In the Department of the Ministry we seek to be the pastoral helper and advocate of all Pastors in setting forth as best we can the ways in which our total ministry can rise to the highest level of worth and performance. We, too, have as a divine commission the obligation to care for the Pastors of our Churches, individually and collectively.

But this is not all. There is a second kind of ministry which can only be rendered by the initiative of those who need it and ask for it.

In the local Church it is the service the Pastor can perform only to those who come to him with their needs. Who among us has not echoed the lament of Christ, "How often I would have comforted you . . . but ye would not."?

The financial needs of Churches come to the attention of our Board of Home Missions in great volume, and great sums are expended in answer to such calls for help. But there are spiritual resources available in our fellowship which are too seldom tapped, partly because our general ministers are human like local Pastors, partly because they are not asked. Our Department is set up to help churches and conferences in their efforts to recruit, train, and order the corps of the ordained, those who share with Christ the call to minister, but who, unlike Him, must sometimes be ministered unto.

Fraternally yours,

Nathanael M. Guptill

THE MINISTER AND THE PARISH

"When to conform . . . and when to stand on principle as a non-conformist is a problem which plagues every minister . . . ," says a veteran Congregational clergyman and editor, and suggests "a set of principles by which we may set our course."

THE MINISTER; A MAN APART?

by JOHN R. SCOTFORD

IN THE ANCIENT PHRASE of our fathers, a man is "set apart" for the ministry. We would raise the question as to how far apart he should be, and how this can be accomplished.

Fundamentally there are two conceptions of the ministry.

The Protestant ideal is that a minister should follow the same pattern of life as the lay people, only do it in a more Christian way. He should apply his religion to every phase of life. This harks back to the Jewish dietary law which was designed to carry the thought of God into the common acts of living.

The Catholic ideal is that religion should become all of life. This reaches its climax in the monk who leads a contemplative life but is reflected in the celibacy of the priesthood and of the nuns. In a multitude of ways the "religious" life is set over against the common life.

In their extreme form neither of these ideals are practical today.

The Protestant minister who undertakes to apply his Christian ideals in any wholesale fashion to the economic and social issues of the day has a terrible time. He may hate war and personally be a conscientious objector, but if he pays taxes, or owns stock of any sort, he is supporting and even profiting by the institution of war. He may abhor alcoholic drinks but if he buys stocks or even takes out a life insurance policy he will find that he is profiting by the growth of grain, the fabrication of containers, or the rent of property which contributes in some way to the liquor traffic. He may be able to keep his wife walking in a puritanical path, but his sons and daughters are likely to follow practices of which he does not approve.

The sincere Catholic also has his troubles. Recently the Roman Church has shown great wisdom in permitting the publication of realistic accounts of monastic and clerical life, such as Monica Baldwin's *I Leap Over the Wall* and Father Ralph Pfau's account of his struggles with alcohol as set forth in *Look*. Our local nuns have a car, and we have dubbed one of the drivers "Sister Zephyr" and we suspect that some day she will find herself in a non-religious fix. Life refuses to be narrowed down to merely religious concerns.

On the other hand, we are indebted to a former Catholic priest for two excellent insights into this problem. He states that the Roman Church "keeps a man up against God" and compels him to lead a "disciplined life."

From 1910 until at least 1930 a considerable portion of the Protestant clergy rebelled against the external forms which set ministers apart and put a high value on our identification with the laity. As some one said in the seminary, "We are men first and ministers second."

Ministers are no more successful than officers of the law in disguising them-

selves. A plain clothes cop is still a cop, and a sport shirted preacher a preacher. Some years ago the New Yorker printed a delicious story about an evangelist who was tired of being "brothered" and who yearned to be like other men, so he went to a resort, got into a bathing suit, and had a glorious time with some young people—only when he left the pool a girl called after him, "Good bye, Reverend!" I have never worn clerical attire, and yet I have repeatedly been spotted as a minister in situations which offered no external clues to my calling.

This leads me to two facts of life which every minister needs to face:

We cannot separate ourselves from the life about us. Despite the principles which we profess, we are involved in its sins and are defiled by some of its practices.

Neither can we wholly merge ourselves with society as we know it. If we are true to our calling, we will find ourselves in some measure "apart" from our fellow men. Here we can take some comfort in the example of Jesus. In many ways he followed the pattern of his day, and yet he did not involve a wife and children in his misfortunes.

The Protestant minister must walk a perilous path. If he sets himself too much "apart" he becomes a recluse and has little influence on the life about him. If he keep himself too little "apart" he becomes just a good fellow who goes down the common path of conformity, which means that his effectiveness is largely lost. There are both those who "live away" from their people both spiritually and physically, and those who are too much with them—such as the air force chaplain of whom it was said, "The only time we knew he was a minister was when he prayed over us before a mission."

When to conform and render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and when to stand on principle as a non-conformist is a problem which plagues every minister, and from which there is no escape. And neither is there any easy answer. Every honest minister knows that there are times when he has made a fool of himself on some issue which was really not important, and that he has kept silent when he should have spoken out—only did not know what to say! In such matters none of us have any grounds for spiritual pride, for we have all gone astray.

What we need is a set of principles by which we may set our course. To face each situation on its merits requires a quickness of wit and an intellectual penetration which few of us have. Out of the past have come three systems of ministerial discipline.

THE FIRST MIGHT be called the external. Under it a minister wears a certain sort of attire and each day goes through certain religious offices. This has many practical advantages. It is said that clerical clothes were devised as a means of knowing what the people who wore them were up to. In some communities the right collar is a great help in getting into homes and in keeping out of the hands of traffic officers, and the public likes to have all "men of God" openly labelled for quick identification. Some men feel more secure and therefore more comfortable when they "dress their part." On the other hand many of us feel that a special manner of dress is a way of asking for special privileges and that it leads lay people to act in an unnatural way towards us.

A second form of discipline might be termed the moralistic. There were certain things which a minister did not do—travel on Sunday (long ago), swear, smoke or drink, dance, go to shows. This was too simple and too superficial. To a greater or less degree these inhibitions have ceased to inhibit—and the Alcoholics Anonymous are not without benefit of clergy.

The third form of discipline is pietistic. In the Catholic church and in the more liturgical bodies this is a matter of going through certain prescribed forms every

(*Continued on page 6*)

"Plain human kindness can do a world of good"

LONELY AND YE VISITED ME

by GRAHAM R. HODGES*

HARDLY AN ASSOCIATION in our fellowship does not have at least one minister, new to the calling or to our denomination, trying to build up a "difficult situation" out of inexperience and with scant knowledge of existing machinery and aids which could help him.

With our loose jointed system of freedom and lack of supervision we also have many hundreds of pastors who long for closer fellowship and connections, yet don't know how to go about it. State superintendents and conference staff do what they can. But their time is necessarily limited and often cluttered with details we foist upon them.

At this point plain human kindness and the friendly right hand of fellowship can do a world of good and no harm. Not far from these men new to our ranks are always older ministers in more established positions. Busy though they are and important though they might believe themselves (and not many are like this) they could do nothing better than visit their new colleague when he first arrives.

Here is young pastor Brown, newly come from another denomination, into the Mainville Parish. Seminary training taught him the difference between existentialism and orthodoxy but somehow left untouched so many of the practical problems. His salary is low, the parsonage is run down, the Sunday School has only two teachers, and the church furnace is on the blink. He and his wife would move if they could. The Conference office is far away.

One evening a friendly middle aged couple come—Bill Jones and his wife. Bill is pastor ten miles away and widely respected around those parts. Their hearts go out to the Browns—they see themselves a quarter century past—and know that this young couple, if they will, can make these next few years the best of their lives.

Bill offers help, counsel, and encouragement without seeming to. Most of all, he brings friendship. Before he leaves he makes a date with Brown to attend the state ministers' convocation next month. They'll ride down together. Brown is glad to hear the state conference will pay half the expenses for men in his salary bracket. Mrs. Jones invites the Browns for supper next Tuesday.

Common courtesy demands this call. But so often it isn't made, or is made months too late. It can be so valuable. Our Conference staff makes such calls but because of their official nature they can never be as effective as a "concerned" pastor from nearby.

Today we have so many new young pastors. And we have so many young and middle age men coming from other communions. Whether this is good or bad isn't the point—they are now a part of us. Perhaps some come from backgrounds not quite as polished, educationally speaking. But so many are such good men.

Older and more established pastors have a duty to orient newcomers by visits, inclusion on committees, invitations to take them to various association and conference affairs, and in other ways an attentive eye can always detect.

In 1949 I had just come to Ticonderoga, New York. Hardly had I arrived when friendly Walter Page, from the

*Mr. Hodges is minister in Watertown, N. Y. and a frequent contributor to religious journals.

Federated Church of Westport, twenty-seven miles north, invited me to attend the state ministers' convocation two weeks off. I didn't go that year but the invitation did much for me. I shall never forget it.

In all our vast national promotional schemes, and they are necessary, in all our feud betwen liberalism, orthodoxy, neo-orthodoxy, fundamentalism, etc., plain old human warmth and friendship are still reliable.

The next time you're driving through a town where you know there's a struggling new man working against odds, why not swing off the highway and stop for a few minutes? Too busy? "I was lonely and ye visited me."

The Minister; A Man Apart? (*Continued from page 4*)

day. In the non-liturgical churches a minister is supposed to "pray and read the Bible every day" but he is left to his own devices as to how this is to be accomplished.

At this point some of us of the older generation were caught in a spiritual dilemma. We revolted against a formalistic and self-conscious pietism which expressed itself primarily in sonorous words, while we had little luck in lifting ourselves by our spiritual bootstraps. We failed to feed the springs of our own inner life effectively.

Recent years have seen a great improvement. The flood of devotional literature has helped the clergy as much as the laity. The emphasis upon worship has compelled ministers to give study and thought to the composition of prayers. The practice of prayer has taken on new dimensions.

The discipline of the clergy, either in externals or matters of the spirit, cannot be achieved by legislation. One of our difficulties today arises from too many rules in the past. What is one man's meat is another man's poison in this area. And yet if a minister is to continue in his calling effectively he must submit himself to some sort of discipline. He may accept the rules prescribed by others, as do our Catholic friends, or he may follow self-imposed practices, as do the Friends, but his life must be governed by a conscious set of principles. Otherwise he will find himself in the solitude of some lonely mountain peak by himself or plunged into a valley of confusion in which he is just "another man."

THE MINISTER AND THE DENOMINATION

Department Editor: RICHARD P. CARTER, 211 High Street, Suffield, Connecticut

A young minister reflecting upon his impressions of the International Congregational Conference at Hartford discovers:

A MESSAGE FOR AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALISTS

by ARTHUR ROUNER*

THE GREAT COUNCILS of our denomination mean *some*thing to everyone. *No* one there is something; a memory, an impression, sometimes disappointment, and sometimes,—sometimes a glorious and consuming excitement.

At Hartford this was supremely so. Hartford had something. The one conference, that unfortunately the fewest number of Americans were able to attend, meant everything. I write this because Hartford said something to me that I want never to forget. It spoke to me a word about what it means to be a Congregationalist. It spoke to me about Congregationalism and the Spirit.

I do not mean it was said in so many words; nor did it come from any one speech. It was something gained from people. It was testimony in discussion groups, it was comments in the group meetings, it was conversation on the grass, and fellowship at tea. It was a gradual learning and inspiration from people who were not Americans, people I did not know—the delegates from the Congregational Churches of Great Britain.

There was a spirit about every one of them that always seemed to suggest an experience, a common tradition, a way of believing, a way of doing things that I knew little about.

It was strange. I tried to get at it in every way I could. We talked Congregationalism. We compared notes. Of course, we were Congregationalists together. But they understood it and lived it in a way we Americans rarely do.

We say that freedom is our heritage, freedom our uniqueness. We call our Congregationalism democratic, the peculiarly American institution. We reject ecclesiastical bondage—but we do it for freedom's sake. All of us say that freedom is the essence of our way.

But to my English friends this was odd indeed. "Freedom is only a by-product of our Way," they said. "Our gift is the Spirit! Our forefathers fought to be free only to submit themselves in utter obedience to the authority of Christ. They longed for the simple leading of His Spirit."

And my friends quite obviously believed that Christ really *does* exercise His authority in the affairs of men. That "where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." "This is what makes a Church," they said. "Christ in the midst of His people. Men and women gathered around Him, prayerfully open to His will and ready for His guidance. That is our tradition. That is the heart of our life."

Somewhere, perhaps centuries ago, this conviction had issued in an institution that America has lost—the Church Meeting. The experience of praying and sharing each month with your Christian brothers in the concerns of the Church. This was the secret. This was what had made these English, Welsh, Australian, and Scottish Congregationalists people of the Spirit.

*Mr. Rouner is minister in Williamsburg, Mass.

The comparison between us was embarrassing. We Americans at Hartford were the organizers, the big operators, the leaders of big churches who could quote boom statistics and reveal the mysteries of the successful Every Member Canvass. By comparison, our British friends were from tiny churches. They were quiet in manner. They talked of but humble accomplishments. But they possessed a quality of life that was intangible and wonderful. They shared an attitude and a faith that was quite obviously born of the Spirit.

It was this attitude and faith that made Hartford for me. It made that week an experience that will influence my life, and fashion my ministry. These new friends from across the sea are people of the Spirit, I discovered, because in their church life, they take time to *hear* the Spirit.

Evidently, this is the way they do things. Their tradition of monthly Church Meetings for listening and loving together is designed for the hearing of the Spirit. They are in no rush about making decisions. The Spirit moves as He wills, they say, and they are prepared to wait. Congregationalism with them may be the slowest way there is of doing business, but they rejoice in it.

At Hartford, one American couldn't believe that the International Congregational Council had met specifically *not* to do its theological thinking aloud, nor to make pronouncements to the world and to its constituents, but simply to get to know one another and the world in which it must witness—as the advance literature had stated. Obviously, this was a British idea. "Can it be," he cried, "that this great council has no word to speak to our time? Of course, we must pass resolutions and make pronouncements!"

In response, one of the English delegates replied quietly, gently, and with utter sincerity, "We could not declare that we were coming to Hartford with the avowed intention of passing resolutions, and making public pronouncements. We come to Hartford as strangers. If God wills, it may be that as the week passes we may so grow to love and understand one another that together the Spirit may lead us to hear some Word and to speak it. But we could not assume it would happen. Whether it will or not, none of us can yet know."

What a different spirit. What a wonderful faith that God would give us, through His Spirit, words enough to say and works enough to do, if only we dared to take the time to listen.

After all, what good is a great pronouncement unless the whole people of God proclaim it together, believing it, supporting it, and saying of it as our forefathers so often said: "It seemeth good to us and to the Holy Spirit."

Here is the genius of our Congregational way—the gathered people made of one mind and heart by the living power of the Spirit. And our British friends are this kind of people because they have taken time to hear what the Spirit is saying.

And they have the Spirit also because they trust people. They really believe that God can quite wonderfully use even very ordinary people if they honestly gather together in His Name. Our sin is that we do not quite believe this. Let the business be done by all the people every month, and by means of prayer? Ridiculous! we say. We would never get anything done. The idea of braving out, as our British brethren do, on the uncertain seas of congregational discussion by the whole membership makes most of us shudder. How would we get our programs through? And think of the time it would take! No, the easy way, the efficient way, the American way to run a church is by committee. None of those multifarious ideas and differences of opinion to deal with. No well-laid plans vetoed at the last moment.

But Congregationalism means the *whole* people, every member gathered together, trusted and needed, thinking, praying, and sharing in the work of the Church.

And yet, in most American Congregational Churches the whole congregation is never gathered together at one time. Even among the largest, half the membership is a high average for Sunday morning. It is when we are all there, meeting, knowing and learning to love one another, that trust is possible. And it is when Christian men and women meet with this deep kind of trust toward one another, that the Spirit of the Lord can move among them with power.

With our English brethren the people *are* there to be trusted. The congregation really *does* gather together. After a meeting in one of the great Hartford churches a little English lady minister turned to me and asked, "How many people do you think could worship here at one time on a Sunday?" I guessed at about five hundred. Then she pointed to the figure in the church calendar telling of its large membership, and said, "But how do they all get in?" I explained that there probably were two services, and that with us usually only half the members come to service on Sunday anyway. To her this was amazing. "How many members do you have in your church?," I asked. About 270 was her answer. "But do all your members come to worship?" "Oh no," she said, "there are a few—mothers with young children who cannot come, but the non-members make up for them." "How many does that make all told?," I asked. "Oh, about 300" was her answer. A small church by our standards—even a small attendance—But nearly 100% of the members at worship together on the Lord's Day! This is what a Congregational church should be!

So our British friends are a people of the Spirit because they repeatedly gather together in a fellowship of trust and love.

And the Congregational way in England is the way of the Spirit because they expect God. They believe the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Their whole tradition of the Church Meeting, of waiting together in quietness and prayer, depends upon it. For if God does not come, if the Spirit does not move in their midst, then their birth-right as a church is denied. The whole tradition, their concept of Congregationalism itself is failure and folly, if the Spirit does not come. These Britons expect God, and He comes.

Do we, in our worship services, in our annual "corporation" meetings, and in our denominational councils really expect our Lord Christ to be there, full of power and strong to save?

ONLY WHEN we honestly expect God will His Spirit be present in our churches.

In this day of ecumenical and denominational re-awakening, our charge, above all things, is to be not so much the free people, as the people of the Spirit. This is the witness God has called Congregationalists to make. Our mission is to be a Spirit-filled church. It is to be that people who dare to spend hours in the Church Meeting listening for God to speak; to be those whose one aim is not efficiency as a denomination, but to be those who can listen patiently to one another, and can wait days and weeks for decisions to be made because we want them to be unanimous and of God. It is to be a people who really believe that Christ alone can lead us in all things if we honestly obey Him: that He can lead us even without the aid of authoritative bishops and ecclesiastical law.

In short, our destiny is to be a people committed to the New Testament way of life and to the Lord Who alone makes that life possible. The great meeting at Hartford could mean a new lease on this life in American Congregationalism. If only we will have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Here are techniques we may share with our people which, the writer, minister of the First Congregational Church in Crossville, Tennessee, attests, "will lead us to mature prayer, to prayer that is without ceasing."

GROWING IN THE LIFE OF PRAYER

by HAROLD WILEY FREER

WHEN ST. PAUL wrote "Pray without ceasing," he was not suggesting a spate of words. For the Apostle prayer was a constant attitude of awareness of the presence of God, to Whom he offered himself with rejoicing and thanksgiving. True enough, he had his times of prayer, but they were undergirded and augmented by frequent ejaculations of intercession, of thanksgiving, of adoration, which burst upward from the constancy of that awareness. In similar manner many generations later Brother Lawrence taught that practice of the presence of God, in which continually the offering of himself, while preparing a meal, sweeping the floor, journeying to buy wine for his monastery, as well as during the stated daily hours of worship, was his prayer.

But such prayer does not come easily. It is as Adam said to his friend in Christopher Fry's play, "A Sleep for Prisoners." When David offered to "make the introduction," he said with pointed gesture, "God—man; man—God"; to which Adam replied wistfully, "I wish it were so easy." Yet this can be.

For prayer is far more than a shopping list handed to God with the request, as Gerald Heard has phrased it, "fill this for me in the next five minutes." Nor is it the beggar's cup shaken under the nose of God, as Lillian Smith so vividly has pictured prayer. It can be the constant awareness of God's presence for each one of us who will seriously attempt the practice of prayer. Alone, or with others in experimental research through groups, we will discover a series of levels or plateaus of growth in the life of prayer that will lead us to mature prayer, to the prayer that is without ceasing.

I
Beginning Prayers

Before the first week has come to a close (and for some folk, within twenty-four hours), an earnest attempt at the practice of prayer will bring a delight, a sense of well-being, a pleasant awareness of inner peace, that is quite surprising to the pray-er. One has a feeling of warmth toward the whole world, as though he wishes to tell everyone what he is finding. After all, results are finally coming through to me through prayer! In other times I have prayed casually, not expecting too much—and receiving no more than that! But now! I want to place my hand on the shoulder of the world, look it in the eye, and say, Come and see!

As the weeks of serious practice come one upon the other, most people will find themselves following one of three patterns. Some will seek to remain in that state of delight and well-being, hugging their pleasure to themselves. Like Peter of old on the Mount of Transfiguration, they will try to settle down in tents of ecstasy, turning away from the pain of

the world. Such an attitude is wrong, for it is essentially a form of pagan contentment. It is truly an opiate of the people, drugging them with sweetness and light.

Others will follow a second pattern. "See what *I* can do with prayer!" they will exclaim. It becomes a tool in their hands, a tool to move God. They study to learn new techniques by which through the Spirit (They say) they may do wonderful things. This pattern, too, is wrong, for prayer is but a means to manipulate God, as though man were the Master Mind, and God his servant.

But some folk will find themselves shaken by an inner restlessness. They see as never before the evil in the world. Far more significant, they see the evil that is in themselves. What has been carefully hidden from themselves is now suddenly revealed. I see how impatient I am, how resentful, how proud, how angry, how unloving. Others have long seen these in me—but not I! Why not? Why have I not known my true self?

This awakening of self-knowledge leads to a searching of one's inner motives. Just why do I do the things I do? Like St. Paul we confess that the things we want to do we fail to do; the things we do not want to do, those we do! Who can save us from that death? So we begin to see that we must change ourselves, that we must help others to change themselves.

II

The Way of Self-Examination

Then it is that we begin to move onto a new plateau of prayer. We do pray for others, but our prayers are mostly for ourselves. Yet how ineffective they seem to be, no results as far as I am concerned. For how sinful I am! No longer does the phrase "miserable sinner" offend me. The Eternal God is beginning to reveal my sins to me. Becoming more sensitive to His love, I know how far I have traveled from His house.

At the same time we discover that we are growing less critical of others. Our harsh judgments, our unfair comparisons, our unloving criticism that we have used to build up ourselves as we tear down others suddenly are gone. Some of us for years deliberately have tried to control or even to eliminate these critical thoughts or words, but we have found the task almost too much for us. Now, without conscious effort on our part, often without any thought of it at all, we are amazed to notice that days or even weeks have gone by—and not once has there been as much as a tiny criticism. Our learning to pray for others, with the love that must go along with such intercession, plus the certain awareness of our own sinful thoughts and actions, have changed our entire way of thinking, of speaking. What we had tried through human willing to bring under control is suddenly no more. Through God's grace alone has come the beginning of the end of all critical thought and action. Blessed be His name!

In this purging of self as we learn to love others and God, we find also that we are becoming keenly sensitive to God's will. We begin to "listen" to the voice within, then to follow it. Each day's triumph in following that voice, no matter how simple its call may be, makes that much easier the next day's victory. For most of us no difficult choices face us day by day. We heed His leading in the simple routine by which through His grace we find our life. That day by day practice of listening to and heeding His will, at first the result of conscious action, but later the inevitable fruit of our growing understanding of God as we begin to understand ourselves, is the preparation for the difficult choices that sooner or later will upset our day. Then we will know to wait, not to make a move of any kind unless action is immediately demanded, and then to move only after our best thinking. We will make mistakes, time and again our choice proving to be

the wrong one in the light of subsequent events; but each experiment in following His will teaches us to listen carefully, to weigh cautiously, to act boldly.

This increasing sensitivity to His will gives us a new sense of moral values. Outer conformity to the mores of our culture is far less important to us. After all, knowing ourselves as we now begin to do, we wonder that we are not continually being caught by our own evil. That new thought in turn helps us refuse to condemn others, as we have already seen. For I know, one says, that if I were in his shoes, I would have been a greater sinner!

But inner motives, inner attitudes, these become the important ones. We see that our pride, our resentful manner, our unlovingness, our thoughtlessness,—these and the like are the true sins of the spirit. Not the law of man but the law of God—this we must not disobey. But not because of fear. Not because we are afraid God will punish us. It is because of our love for Him. It is the perfect love that casts out all fear which slowly but surely is coming alive in us.

Strangely enough, this new understanding of ourselves and of the love of God often creates a puzzlement that disturbs many of us. For we find it now to be a real task to pray. Frequently we are touched with the mood of spiritual dryness, in which the act of getting acquainted with ourselves proves to be most tedious. The joy and delight of our beginning prayers turns into plodding routine, as we see with new revelations our many-sidedness. It is as Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote years ago: "I should know myself better if there were not so many of me."

Some of us,, refusing for a time to admit that we are legion, may find escape as one young woman did. In her prayer group she reported that she had covered a mirror in her kitchen with a towel. "I just could not look at myself any more," she continued. "What I was beginning to see made me ashamed." She went on to say, with a laugh, "But I couldn't hide myself from me!"

This movement of prayer on the plateau of self-examination is much like our experience with marriage. The first delights of the honeymoon pass, and the necessary adjustments between two people begin. There are always some who wonder if it is worthwhile continuing a marriage when the delights of the early months and years have ended. Such folk may seek relief in divorce. But those who hold on through the testing years, knowing that true love is yet underneath the dryness of routine days and nights, will some day know what real marriage can be.

So it is that some of us, no longer finding the pleasure and delight of early weeks and months of serious practice of prayer, are ready to drift along. We have learned much of value that we just cannot let go. We hope to remain at that level. A few actually do stop their search, turning their backs upon prayer. For both groups this means the ending of growth.

III

The Way of Illumination

But those who do persist in the life of prayer will gradually become aware of a climb to another plateau. Their own weakness and sin are still evident. There is no lessening of that sad recognition. Yet, like Isaiah of old, having seen the King, the Lord of hosts, and having accepted the forgiveness of the coal that purged the evil of their lips, they know as never before the deep love of God within the inner heart.

They have turned away from much praying for self. The prayer of petition, the "give me" that was so prevalent earlier, even the later requests for courage, for wisdom, for patience, for insight, almost completely disappears. Instead, there is the prayer of commitment: "accept me, use me, serve through me."

Along with this new kind of petition, this offering of self, is a more attentive listening to God's will, a clearer certainty of His leading through all the events of one's day. Because we are learning to listen more and more, our prayers are far less specific than before. Words become of little importance, and the fewer we use no longer try to "tell" God what we wish to do, nor to suggest to Him what we think He ought to do. For many of us words vocal or mental are but in the way, as we learn to rest in the Light of His spirit.

"To rest?" Not quite. The Mary-of-the-inner-spirit, though still being fed at the feet of the Master, rises to serve gladly with the Martha-of-the-inner-spirit. Visiting the sick or the lonely, sharing in church or denomination as teacher, choir member, officer, committee drudge, volunteering in the life of the community as Red Cross worker, Gray Lady, scout leader, car driver, ward helper, and a host of others—these are but a few of the ways we show our love for God. In this service a new delight flows through us, less rosy than that at the beginning of our life of prayer, but more radiant. Our happiness has grown into joy. We know deep within that through His grace we are being used by God.

Concomitant with the enlarging sphere of service is a remarkable sense of sympathy toward and understanding of others. Our warm outreach to others can best be revealed in our deepening feeling of inadequacy before the love of God. True enough, others around us may be quite terrible in their human relationships, but really, we are worse. Knowing ourselves as we do, we just cannot condemn the actions of others as once we did. It is not so much the negative attitude of being less critical of others, which we found within ourselves in the second plateau of prayer, as it is the positive attitude of kinship with others, love for others. There is a tendering of spirit that frequently brings wet eyes. Ashamedly at times we may try to hide the tears, but they are God's gift of love, washing clean our selfish vision. Because of those folk around us, friends and strangers, we lift a hundred little aspirations daily, prayers of intercession, of thanksgiving, of adoration, of blessing.

Such is the continuing sense of God's presence that now we come to know the full meaning of creative silence. Still we will read many books, but in the quiet of our solitude we will not hasten like before to grab a book lest we be alone a moment. We will begin to read a spiritual classic, and then will find that for thirty minutes, even an hour, we have sat in deep silence, "looking at God, and God looking at me," as the peasant told the Cure d'Ars. The heart has truly entered into our reading.

This is indeed a high level of prayer. The fulfillment of our love for God is attained by our love for our fellow man. The light of His spirit truly shines on our pathway.

IV
The Way of Contemplation

Then it is, through the grace of God, that we emerge upon a new plateau of prayer. Neither depression nor ecstasy touches us. The former zigzag of ups and downs is replaced by an undulation of mood that rests upon a norm of assurance in the providence and care of God. We no longer are important, only He has meaning and reality. Yet we know less than ever about the wonder of God. As Douglas Steere has said in "On Listening to Another," "In the adoration of him, we find ourselves always quivering before a mysterious depth that we cannot get to the bottom of."

Now we begin to realize that our whole life is a prayer. Words spoken or thought are very rare, but our commitment becomes as complete as we can make it, being renewed, refreshened every day. St. Paul's words, "Pray without ceasing," have become real.

There is almost no praying for the self, not for things, not for qualities of character, not even that God will use us. The whole life is an offering made gladly to God, in which the full prayer of Jesus, "Not my will, but thine, be done," alone fills our inner being. Yet those words are seldom thought. They have become part of our very selves, and need no expression.

So, too, there is almost no praying for others. It is not that we no longer wish to intercede. Rather, it is that we no longer NEED to do so. Our life is an intercession, our prayer is our love, and our love is a prayer. All the folk we know are offered to God, held in the Light, surrounded by the Light, one with the Light. Friend and foe have become one with us, one with God. We can say no words. They have become a hindrance. Like St. Seraphim of Sarov, whom Douglas Steere quotes in "On Listening to Another," we "must pray only until God the Holy Spirit descends . . . . when he comes to visit us, we must cease to pray."

In humble recognition we are aware of His presence. T. D. Allen in his novel, "Troubled Border," writes of the Indian wife of a trader for the Hudson's Bay Company, who was compelled by her inner spirit to leave her tent one night. Allen writes: "Marguerite . . . stood, drinking in her fill of the night and then strolled on entranced. Coming to a table rock extending over the waters, she stepped out and, instinctively, lifted her arms, spreading them wide and upward. 'Merci', she whispered.

"It was just something she did, not exactly a prayer. Prayers, she said on her knees. Also a prayer asked for more and at these moments, Marguerite would never think of asking for more. And yet the Great Spirit was in this rite of hers. He heard her, she knew. He was out there listening, and he knew that within her outspread arms she was including, as of a piece with all this beauty, her children and her Johnny. He knew that she was saying thank you and feeling a little guilty because she possessed more than her share of love and goodness.

"And the way she knew he was there was that, whenever she stopped like this night or day, just to be glad for things as they were and to murmur, '*Merci*,' the Great Spirit answered.

" '*Merci*,' he whispered back and when she heard it the moon grew brighter for an instant and made her warm."

So we know.

For a rare handful of folk the prayer of quiet, of union, are yet to come, plateaus beyond the most of us. But these four levels are ours, the gifts of God as we grow. For the life of prayer is one of continual dynamic growth, ever-changing, ever-moving towards oneness with God. For it is essentially commitment, a life lived in and for God.

Quotations:

"On Listening to Another" by Douglas Steere (Harper and Brothers, New York: 1955), page 45. Same source, page 45.

"Troubled Borders" by T. D. Allen (Harper and Brothers, New York: 1954), pages 53-54.

THE MINISTER AND THEOLOGY

Dept. Editor: RAYMOND E. GIBSON, South Congregational Church, Pittsfield, Mass.

In preparation for an article on "Theological Discussion Groups" for a future issue, the editor of this department would like to receive word about such groups in the churches of our fellowship. Please give the size of your group, frequency and length of meeting, texts or subjects being discussed, use of lecturers and your estimate of the group's success or failure.

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Short essays on matters of theological concern are always welcome in this department.

* * * *

There is a growing interest in symbolism in many quarters today. Here, the minister of Central Congregational Church in Attleboro Falls, Mass., explores one dimension of the problem.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CROSS

by JOSEPH B. AXENROTH

AS INDIVIDUALS we establish either a *static* or *dynamic* relationship with symbols. The relationship is static when the symbol is seen not within a space-time context but as an object for intuitive contemplation or rational discourse in and of itself. It is dynamic when seen in action, as a moving thing, containing a coherent chain of analogies. This dynamic relationship fulfills the requirements for the symbolic imagination outlined by Allen Tate[1]: "The symbolic imagination," he says, "conducts an action through analogy, of the human to the divine, of the natural to the supernatural, of the low to the high, of time to eternity . . ." It is the way of the poet, rooted in temporal sequence, in action.

In our day the symbolic imagination has become a rare commodity. More abundant is the type of imagination which Tate calls *angelic.* Modern estrangement from nature has built up the illusion that minds suffer no limitations of sense, that they are able to arrive at immediate knowledge of essences. Men try to imagine without images. Tate says, "I call that imagination angelic which tries to disintegrate or to circumvent the image in the illusory pursuit of essence. When human beings undertake this ambitious program, divine love becomes so rarefied that it loses its human paradigm, and is dissolved in the worship of intellectual power, the surrrogate of divinity that worships itself. It professes to know nature at the same time that it has become alienated from nature in the rejection of its material forms."[2]

Since the image plays no part in it, angelic imagination is hardly imagination at all. The Hebrews, for all their vivid imaginative power, had a blind spot in their genius with respect to the use of images as representations of God. Various threatening idolatries undoubtedly played a part in their disenchantment; but idolatry is the result of a static relationship with the image which causes it to be contemplated in and for itself, without reference to the space-time context from which it sprang. Divorced from

that context the relationship easily turns to idolatrous worship.

A comparison of the first commandment with the Deuteronomic "Shema" shows how far the Hebrews travelled this road. The first commandment reads, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me."[3] This has imagery; but the emphasis is on the negative phrase, "You shall have no other gods . . ." In the Shema a significant transformation takes place. The imagery vanishes and the emphasis shifts from negative to positive. We read, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."[4]

In the Shema the ten commandments are compressed into one, with the imagery pressed out. It is the product of the angelic rather than the symbolic imagination. The negatives of the ten commandments disappear before the moral implication of love for God. It is paradoxical that the Hebrews, after condemning the use of images, entered into a static relationship with the words of the Shema which was in itself idolatrous: "And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates."[5]

What is only implicit in the Great Commandment is the vertical-horizontal reference it has for human beings. It would have men reach up to God, but at the same time out beyond themselves to one another. But is this not what we find expressed in powerful visual form in the figure of Christ upon the Cross? Christ is seen looking upward toward God while at the same time his hands are outstretched eager to embrace the whole of mankind. This is accomplished within a space-time complex of action. If Christ had not had his attention rooted in the heavens, the opportunity to embrace humanity from the Cross would not have been his. The full meaning of the Cross is dependent upon its historical setting. This setting must be supplied by the symbolic imagination. The symbol is complex; it includes Christ on the Cross looking upward to God and reaching outward to embrace humanity, and its full power becomes apparent only to him who enters into a dynamic relationship with it.

It is the preacher who must recreate the context of action within which the drama of the Cross is enacted. The action unfolds under conditions of extreme suffering, with the shadow of the most horrible death cast upon the proceedings, and in the figure of Jesus both God and man suffer the same pain and anguish. In the midst of this suffering Christ looks to God. He bears in his body the full weight of human sin. The Cross which carries him was conceived and constructed by man's inability to love God or himself. It is the ultimate curse: to be hung on a tree is to reach the depths of degradation. And in the person of Jesus humanity is summed up in one individual looking to God for salvation. We view the Cross with this line of vision: *from* the depths of the earth into which it is sunk, *through* the person of Jesus, *to* the heavens above where God is drawn into the suffering agony enacted below.

The significance of seeing Jesus there is that he is a human being able to take the full weight of human sin upon himself because of the strength given him by his loving relationship to God. If we would see clearly the empty Cross of Easter, we must see it first holding the Christ, and the Christ holding the rottenness and filth humanity in its rage has heaped upon him. We must see Christ looking to God with all his heart, soul, and might, and with full faith that love can not be broken even on a Cross.

But our vision must not remain in the

heavens; it must come down *from* the heavens *through* the outstretched arms of Christ *to* the mass of suffering humanity. Looked at in this way, with the actual scene reconstructed from the New Testament, the Cross receives an immediacy it otherwise could not have. It becomes relevant to our world, our situation. It becomes the focal point of history where the suffering and anguished appeals of men are brought within reach of God's love through Christ, and at the same time it becomes the channel through which God acts in human lives.

This kind of dynamic relationship with the symbol also sheds light on one of the most difficult theological problems of our day. It helps us to clarify our understanding of the relation of man's love for God to man's love for man. The symbol helps us to see that man's love for God is expressed through his love for neighbor. Without this visual expression of that relationship we are tempted to equate the two. Both are placed on the same plane, with one as good or as important as the other. If we do this, our personal inclinations determine which of the two, love for God or love for man, becomes the dominant force in our lives. Thus it is possible for people to develop a strong interest in either religion or ethics without significantly relating the two. Those of a more intellectual temper, who rely on their senses to give them the truth, develop a scientific interest in "ethical culture" or some other liberal faith; while those of a more mystical or emotional bent become so concerned over their relationship to God that they seem to forget to love their fellow men. The first group lacks an understanding of God's judgment, and has a strong desire to play down the divinity of Jesus; any allegiance they have to him is based entirely on his humanity. The second group lacks an understanding of God's mercy, and places such strong emphasis on Christ's divinity that for all practical purposes his humanity disappears.

The symbol of the Cross, when seen in a dynamic relationship, takes seriously the command, "You shall love the Lord your God . . ." and it points to Jesus as the Christ through whom men arrive at a knowledge of the God they love. It provides the focal point; and in the final analysis, when men have bent their efforts upon loving each other, all this grand effort is shown to be God's. Our love for each other is the way in which God loves us. It is his way of drawing us into a faithful community of human beings who, out of love for him, gain the power to love each other. "We love, because he first loved us."[6]

For some this analysis will have but scratched the surface of the reality inherent in the symbol of the Cross; for others it may make the symbol more complicated than it really is. It is of course, just as simple and just as complex as human personality. One point we would stress, however: God reveals himself to mankind by way of the symbolic imagination. He chose to become a part of the world's body, to recreate himself in the flesh of the world, accepting the humiliation of the Cross, a common means of execution at the time. God's "angelic imagination" arrives at immediate knowledge of essences. That same knowledge must be mediated to mankind through an image. There must be incarnation. How many sermons suffer because "divine love becomes so rarefied that it loses its human paradigm, and is dissolved in the worship of intellectual power?"[7]

1—Allen Tate, "The Man of Letters In the Modern World," The Noonday Press, New York, 1955, p. 96.

2—Allen Tate, loc. cit., p. 97.

3—Exodus 20.2, 3.

4—Deuteronomy 6.4f.

5—Deuteronomy 6.8f.

6—I John 4.19.

7—Allen Tate, loc. cit., p. 97.

Dept. Editor: WILLIAM L. BRADLEY, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Conn.

Dr. White's timely and comprehensive "Report on America" in this section was first presented at the International Congregational Council at Hartford.

Mr. Gowing, who presents a definitive outline of the bases of the ecumenical movement, is minister of the First Congregational Church in North Berwick, Maine, and a Th.D. candidate in the Department of Ecumenics at Boston University School of Theology.

WHY THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT?

by PETER G. GOWING

NOW AND AGAIN in talking with brother ministers about the ecumenical move—I am surprised to meet some who have no idea of what it is all about—nor do they have any sense of what it is that impels the divided Body of Christ to seek "togetherness."

Whether it is looking for "unity" or "union" or "reunion;" whether it seeks practical cooperation or merger or federation, divided Christianity is trying to become less divided. The form of "togetherness" is still undefined. But that the Body of Christ feels impelled to set its house in order is a fact—the reasons are many; they are the subject of this article.

Ecumenical motivation can be classified roughly under four headings: the Christian Mission Imperative, the Social Witness Imperative, the Theological and Spiritual Imperative and the Pragmatic Imperative.

The Christian Mission Imperative

The modern ecumenical movement, at least in its global expression, really originated in the context of the missionary activity of the churches. Missionaries and mission boards have long been appalled at the waste and duplication of effort, to say nothing of the frustrations involved, in presenting the Gospel to non-Christians by a factionalized and fractionalized Christendom. Ecumenists among the missionaries are quick to point out the greater financial resources, the broader base for discovering and inspiring able leadership, and the more effective and less confusing witness that would characterize the missionary work of a more united Body of Christ. The younger churches of Africa and Asia are not concerned with petty cultural, social and even theological differences that divide their parent churches —and much of the pressure for unity comes from them.

It is common knowledge that the great non-Christian religions of the World, particularly Buddhism and Islam, are undergoing significant revivals and are even now offering serious competition to Christian missions in many areas. In the face of this, Christianity can offer an apologetic power only as strong as its unity. Back in 1928 the International Missionary Council sensed the urgency for a greater apologetic power through greater unity:

> "The apologetic power or influence of the Christian religion may

be enormously increased through a genuine international cooperation. The unity or oneness among His followers down the generations, for which Christ prayed, is never to be regarded as an end in itself, but rather as a means to insure the great central end of Christian missions, namely, 'that the world may believe.' Thus, this is the great, the triumphant apologetic. Whenever and wherever we find the Christian faith failing to sweep the field in triumph, Christians will do well to examine themselves as to whether one of the chief causes may not be right here. Divisions among the Christians—denominational, national, racial—have ever been a stumbling-block, but with recent rapid shrinkage of the world these divisions have become more serious and intolerable than ever."[1]

If Christian missions are to grow in effectiveness, then it is imperative that the churches find ways of concerting their efforts together.

The Social Witness Imperative

Those who think deeply about the matter do not fail to be grieved at the fact that Christianity presents an obscured witness to a world that desperately needs its moral as well as spiritual leadership. The words Edward Woods wrote in his book *Moving Towards Unity* in 1936 are hardly less poignant in 1958:

"A race is going on for the soul of mankind, and the competitors in it are Nationalism, Humanism and Communism . . . The oneness of the world, physically and culturally, and the intensification of the age-long problem of how the sections of mankind, in all their huge variety, are to live together, make the dividedness of the Church of God the more horrid and pathetic . . . Never in all history was there a time when the reconciling supra-racial power of the Gospel of the One God was more needed."[2]

Against the growing materialism, the increasing disillusionment with religion and the blatant immorality in international relations which characterizes our world today, divided Christianity pits a distorted, weakened and uninfluential gospel.

If the churches of Christ are to effectively confront the challenges of the world and society, then it is imperative that they find ways of speaking with a united voice.

The Theological and Spiritual Imperative

Very definite theological and spiritual motives inspire the ecumenical movement. Christianity is sensing the judgment of Christ upon its divided state. Church leaders are calling the churches to manifest obedience to the clear will of Christ that they be one. Many people are in accord with the pronouncement by Bishop Nygren (of the Church of Sweden) made in Chicago in 1956: "All division within the church is an attack on Christ himself . . . The ecumenical appeal for unity is the appeal of the gospel itself."[3]

Theologians, denominational leaders and laymen alike feel that the spirit of God in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus impels them to love all others who believe in Jesus. Indeed, some regard the lordship of Christ as the only ecumenical principle!

A number of ecumenical writers see in a reuniting church the restoration of the wholeness, the oneness which it once had but lost, and which by its very nature it should have. Of course there are many who feel as Archbishop Temple felt: "The unity of the church of God is a perpetual fact; our task is not to create it but to exhibit it."[4]

Those who promote the ecumenical movement do not fail to point up the gain

in spiritual treasure which would accrue to a united church:

> "The spiritual riches discovered by divers groups of Christians must become the possession of all Christians. The spiritual values of unity must be won without losing the spiritual treasures present in disunity."[5]

So wrote Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam. Bishop Angus Dun presents a list of such treasures. The Episcopalians could contribute their liturgy of Holy Communion. The Presbyterians could contribute their respect for and ability in preparation and delivery of sermons. The Quakers could contribute their reverence for the silent reaching down of the human spirit into the still working of the Holy Spirit. The list is long—the "unsearchable riches of Christ" which the churches divide and do not now share as a whole.

If Christianity is to conform to the express will of Christ, if it is ever to regain a sense of its essential oneness, if it is to share wholly in the spiritual treasures which are now divided among its separate churches, then it is imperative that those churches find ways of coming into closer cooperation and unity.

The Pragmatic Imperative

Certainly there are compelling pragmatic reasons why greater unity among the churches is desired. And these pragmatic reasons are never out of the minds of honest thinkers no matter how much they would like to gloss over them. Denominationalism is scandalously wasteful of material and human resources. Unity and fellowship of parish life is injured by division among the churches. Both the small denomination and the small congregation are finding it increasingly difficult to exist. Gross inefficiency is characteristic of the present organization of the churches. Henry P. VanDusen in his book *World Christianity*[6] points out that a more adequate program of publication, a greater strengthening of Christian education, a more fruitful enlisting and training and deployment of missionaries, an improved economic stability for younger churches, and a more effective confrontation of governments—all these and more—would result from a radical co-ordination of Christian resources.

Others see in unity the hope of breaking down Protestant provincialism and the resultant restoration of the Christian religion to the dignity and honor it should have in the world.

If the churches are to command the best, most economical use of available resources and so command the respect of the laity, then it is imperative that they find ways of joining together in a more united and cooperative effort.

Let it be said, of course, that the obstacles to the success of the ecumenical movement in achieving real "togetherness" are very great—especially in the areas of faith and order. Nor would I have us unmindful of these obstacles. But any one of the imperatives outlined above would be sufficient *raison d'etre* for an ecumenical movement and all of them together provide the strongest possible motivation for, and, indeed, make urgent the business of coming to grips with the shame of a divided Christianity.

1—*International Missionary Cooperation*, IMC, New York: 1928, p. 9

2—SCM Press, London: 1936, p. 12

3—*Christ and His Church*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia: 1956, p. 120

4—Hodgson, L. (ed.), *Second World Conference on Faith and Order, Edinburgh 1937*, Macmillan Co., New York: 1938, p. 15

5—Oxnam, G. B., *On This Rock*, Harpers, New York: 1951, p. 19

6—*World Christianity Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Abingdon-Cokesbury, New York: 1947, p. 185

"Some of the major aspects of religious life and faith in this country"

REPORT ON AMERICA

by HUGH VERNON WHITE*

ANY DISCUSSION of such a broad subject as this will exhibit both the speaker's personal bias and the limitations of his knowledge. With this admission I shall try to present some of the major aspects of religious life and faith in this country.

Most evident and even conspicuous is the revival of religion and of interest in religion. More people are going to church, there is more openly expressed friendliness toward religion, and religion is given a more prominent place in the news than it has had for a long time. Books about religion, and religious books are often among best sellers. Two questions however beset the minds of responsible Christian leaders. How "real" is this religious interest? and, What are the conditions that have brought it about? These two questions, of course, are closely related. Whatever be the right answers to them, the fact remains that visibly religion flourishes. Furthermore, this access of vitality affects all types of religion from the most conservative, traditional, and conventional, to the most radical, free and informal.

I

The Americanization of Religion

One thing that we must note is that in both superficial and fundamental ways there is an "Americanization" of Christianity in progress. This is an instance of the effect of culture on religion from which the Church has never been entirely free. It is not necessarily good or bad. As a matter of fact it is both. What is of interest to us now is to point out some aspects of the cultural process in the America of today.

The *obvious* way in which Christianity exhibits the American spirit is in a pervasive bustle and vitality. The Church shares in the activism of the time; it has "programs" and "drives" and seeks efficiency in all things. It also has a strongly developed sense for publicity. It uses all the media of modern advertising and "public relations" to let the world know what it is doing and to win popular interest and support. Radio land TV, Audio-visual programs, millions of mimeographed letters, messages, announcements, to say nothing of activities of all sorts that make good news items for the local paper—all these ways of calling attention to the Church and what it is doing mark it as American. It is all as typically American as Gandhi's fasting was Indian.

But a more important aspect of the Americanization of Christianity is the status religion has in relation to government and public processes generally. This has been strikingly, almost shockingly expressed in the title of a book by H. M. Kallen, "Secularism is the Will of God." It is hailed as the "American way" by many who are not churchmen but who value the role of religion and at the same time cherish the constitutional separation of Church and State as the unique and saving genius of American life.

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The "American way" is in fact a fruit picked from the tree of European growth. It represents a society religiously oriented, "this nation under God," in Abraham Lincoln's words, but a nation which completely rejects the idea of an established or official religion. This is indeed a grand experiment in history; the acknowledgement that the nation has a religious foundation and needs the power and the works of religion, and yet the complete secularization of the processes of civil life. It gives rise to ambiguities and inconsistencies, for example the recognition of religious holidays and the employment of chaplains in legislatures and in the armed forces. But it also guarantees religious liberty and frees government from the clericalism which has bedevilled government in many countries. It is at this point that Catholic-Protestant relations are most strained and sensitive. The Roman Catholic Church, upon the dais of a long history of political power, alliances and concordats with governments, claims as normal such a positive relation of government to the Church, as, for example, tax support for parochial schools. Protestants tend to view any such relation as surrender of the very essence of the "American way."

II

Liberalism is in Eclipse

Congregationalists need to take account of the fact that the evangelical liberalism which marks Congregationalism generally is a minority aspect of religion in America. Overwhelmingly American protestantism is conservative. Some denominations are conservative in the sense of holding to a traditional position like the Lutherans. Most others are predominantly conservative in actual sentiment and belief. Beyond this there are numerous small sects, pentecostal, perfectionist, or groups with some highly emphasized point of doctrine, which are what we once called fundamentalist. We cannot, therefore, talk of religion in America as though a gathering of Congregationalists were representative. The weight of numbers at least is toward the opposite pole.

But religious conservatism today wears a new aspect. The old fundamentalism has not disappeared, but it has been substantially replaced by a more responsible, and a more Christian conservatism. The same essential positions remain; verbal inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, etc., but the temper is different and the defense of these positions is based on better scholarship. There is a willingness to see good in much of the biblical and theological work of the liberal, and to enter into debate with him upon a basis of mutual respect. This is made easier by the fact that liberalism also is largely changed both in spirit and in content. The return to the Bible and the biblical view of man, the renewed emphasis on sin and man's need of salvation, abandonment of the simple dogma of progress, all this has brought liberalism much nearer the center of the evangelical tradition. In fact, neither the old liberalism nor the old fundamentalism remains. Liberals can no longer dismiss the conservative as uneducated and out of date, or settle questions by appeal to the "consensus of scholarly opinion" or the "results of modern scholarship." There is scholarship on both sides or on all sides. Today liberal and conservative alike stand on biblical ground. Both see man as a sinner needing salvation. Both find the historic revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and see in the Church the community of faith under divine constraint to proclaim the gospel—or kerygma, if you like,—to a lost world. While we rejoice that fundamentalism has largely disappeared we may also be glad that the extreme of liberalism is in relative eclipse. This represents a stage toward maturity in the religious life of American Protestantism which is good for us all.

III
New Theological Emphases

The theological ferment and creativity of the past generation and of today have produced widespread effects in the life of the churches. Religion is more religious, preaching is more biblical, the church service has become more an act of worship, and the Church itself is being recognized less as a local and contemporary convenience for religious people, and more as the historic community of faith.

I should like to mention four ideas that have entered into the thought of the Church today to change the general tone and even the vocabulary of preaching. The importance of these ideas is that they represent the emergence or restoration of basic elements in the Christian faith.

First is the doctrine of Christian love or the Christian doctrine of love, as *agape*. This Greek word has now become a part of our English vocabulary. The clarification of meaning that has emerged from Nygren's great work has removed a sort of road block in the interpretation of both salvation and ethics. One looks back to the preagape period and sees the Christian preacher in a dilemma. "Love" has a sentimental character; Christian love is *eros* at its best. Ethically the Christian faces the question, How can I love someone I do not like? Theologically he asks, How can the God of Holiness and truth love a mean and sinful human creature? As a matter of fact love very nearly dropped out of the whole interpretation of Christian ethics. We spoke rather of *good will*. Here was something comprehensible and sensible. Secular ethics and philosophy were at home with the good will. The enlightened preacher accepted this respectable but devitalized version of Christian morality.

The solution theologically was similar. In this period before the revival of theology, the doctrine of redemption did not fare very well. When in the mid-twenties Harry Emerson Fosdick preached a sermon on "Repentance" it startled the whole liberal world. *Grace* was scarcely mentioned and *sin* was obsolete, hence, also, the forgiveness of sin. How then can God love man as he is? The answer was given in terms of idealistic philosophy rather than Christian faith. God loves man not for what he is but for what he may become. Or for what he ideally and therefore really is. There has got to be a man before God who is really lovable, or else God's love is sentimental and indulgent.

Now at one stroke the idea of agape freed the Christian preacher from this dual dilemma. For now it is seen that God does not love man because of what man is but because of what He Himself is. And the Christian does not love his neighbor because the neighbor is likeable or lovable, but because he himself is a Christian, that is, one into whose heart Christ has put his own love. There are present today signs that *agape* is beginning to degenerate into something about as sentimental as love was when it had to be replaced by good will to preserve the moral integrity of the faith. But now we have the corrective and we may hope that agape will continue to triumph over both good will and sentimentalism.

Another note that appears in the preaching of today is that of revelation as a Divine Human Encounter. This, also, has been a releasing and stimulating discovery. Revelation is another word that had disappeared from the vocabulary of the liberal preacher. It carried overtones of verbal inspiration and the miraculous intervention of Deity. When it appeared as "progressive revelation" what was really meant was the progressive discovery of religious truth. An age increasingly dominated by scientific thought found the liberal churches embarrassed by the term revelation and they simply did not use it. Ethical and religious insight and empirically established articles of faith took its place.

Buber and Brunner and others delivered us from this bondage. Against the

background of competent philosophical criticism of the knowledge process they declared the fact of personal encounter to be the real source of truth. Put simply, truth is found in personal relations rather than in the relations of ideas. God reveals not doctrines and "truths" but Himself. Back of this affirmation stands, doubtless, the gloomy Dane, but more important and further back, is the Bible. At any rate, for the preacher revelation has now become meaningful and God is no longer barred from his world by the limitations of human knowledge. He is free once more to walk in the Garden and in the streets and even in the churches, and to confront man with His holiness and His grace.

Other emphases in theology have greatly enlivened the Church's sense of the presence and reality of its God,—the idea of the *divine initiative*, and the interpretation of the gospels as being a kerygma, or a preaching rather than essentially biographical data. As regards the divine initiative, one is appalled to look back to a former time and see the degree to which the whole Christian enterprise was looked upon as an aspiration and endeavor of the human spirit. But this is what it actually was for many; Christian men saw the task of Christianity as the conquest of the forces of nature and the much more subtle and unruly forces of history by the enlightened and purified human spirit. Astonishing as it may seem, during the '30s I was asked more than once in Church gatherings why God should be brought into discussions of peace or social justice or any other effort for the common good. And this sometimes by Church leaders of distinction. "*This is our job*," they said.

That was a period of both philosophical and moral idealism. A distinguished missionary found the power of the gospel in "the emotion of the ideal." For two generations the goal was the Kingdom of God, and the doctrine underlying it was some form of idealism. The Kingdom of God was taken to be a society which was to result from the cooperative efforts of men of good will. Present day recognition of God as the party of the first part, can be fully appreciated only against the background of the age of human self-sufficiency. And it makes clear that the preaching of the Church, whatever else it may also be, is primarily proclamation to the world of the redemptive act of God in Christ; that it is in a "Gospel."

I have been speaking of preaching and the way in which creative ideas have come into it. But all this is matched and even augmented by the interest of laymen. The "return to religion" means that in thousands of communities great numbers of people are coming to the churches and joining the churches. Most of these people have known little or nothing of religion or church life. Many of them are educated, alert and consciously seeking in the Church the solution of basic problems both personal and social. Seldom has the Church in any country at any time been confronted with such an opportunity. Here, I should say, is the real locus of evangelism today. The numbers of these inquirers are far greater than the numbers of those who eagerly crowd the gardens and palaces where Billy Graham preaches. They come as families to the churches. Their children fill up the class rooms of the Church schools and swell the numbers of youth groups. Many of the parents are open and responsive to the truth of the Christian faith. The more serious side of the return to religion is found in this new membership in the churches. Many pastors are conducting Bible classes and giving adult instruction in Christian belief and conduct. It is a fortunate thing that the new and clearer ideas in the realm of theology of which I have spoken are now available for the instruction of the new layman. For he is religious, or wants to be. He is ready for and wants decisive religious teaching. It is fortunate

that the liberal part of the Church in increasing measure is now able to meet that need. No one knows how long the door of this opportunity may stand open. In so far as the ministers and lay leaders have entered it the soundest kind of evangelism is being accomplished. It only needs to be multiplied many times. The worker in this harvest is the adequately educated and consecrated minister and the devoted and well prepared laymen.

IV

The Practical Spirit in the Church

Professor Hocking has said, "Religion is something you do." This is certainly true of religion in America. Here the practical spirit appears in full vigor in the Church. It manifests itself today in new ways. The modern church is organized and at work. The pastor is, perforce, a manager. Denominationally and interdenominationally also the Churches seek more inclusive and efficient administration. Many activities that formerly expressed the spontaneous purposes and followed the vision of minority groups in the churches, have now been brought within the over all organizations of the denominations and the National Council. One may ask whether there is still vigor and creative effort for the "causes" that created new agencies in past times; missions, social action, the peace movement, temperance. As we call the roll of these causes we are made aware of great changes in their promotion today as compared with that of a generation ago.

Missions, home and foreign, are now generally integrated into denominational administration and the unified budget. "Temperance" as a major "cause" has all but disappeared. The peace movement seems to be immobilized by a wholly unexpected world situation. The "Social Gospel" is history. Yet the spirit of those earlier days has not been lost. We still have a "social gospel" but it is chastened and sophisticated. Both events and Reinhold Niebuhr have contributed to the chastening and sophistication. This is not the day of the prophet, but of the Christian statesman. And one may ask, where is he? In the thirties one heard of ministers who always, in their pulpit prayers, brought before the Lord the three social issues, world peace, social justice, and race relations. How do these three fare today? As regards world peace interest and support are focussed on the United Nations. But the churches do not operate the United Nations. As regards social justice, the labor unions seem amply able to look out for themselves, and even to need some governmental restraint at times; and the Welfare State has gone beyond the designs of even former socialists. The livest issue of Christian social ethics today is that of race relations. And this is perhaps the most difficult of all. In this country it is bound up with history and sectionalism and politics to such a degree that no clear line of action appears to which the prophetic voice can summon those who want to be "all out" Christians. Patience, wisdom, strategy, the slow process of education are called for, and all this does not make for a "crusade." This is perhaps typical of the whole field of social action. Simple issues and clear and immediate goals of action are no longer before us. In these matters American Christianity is painfully becoming of age. We are learning that not so much the poor but rather the problems of social existence we shall always have with us, and we are in the quest for truly Christian and relevant ways of dealing with them in our time. There is a sort of Christian conscience being built that is both within and without the Churches, that crosses the boundaries between Catholic, Protestant, and Jew. It is a conscience sensitive to the sacredness or inviolability of the human person, and concerned both with his essential freedom and also his full responsibility for his neighbor. Perhaps under the hand of God, the communist denial of this creed provides a world picture in which its meaning is objectified with such clarity

and dread significance that the deeper issue will not be lost.

A new and very significant development in the work of the Church is the increased appropriation by its pastors and leaders of two sciences, psychology and sociology. These are both new sciences which have tended in the past and to a lesser extent in the present to replace religion. A purely naturalistic psychology and a completely secularist sociology can indeed do nothing but reject religion as having any relevance or competence in their fields. We have had that in plenty. We have also had some ministers of religion who in seeking to bring psychology and sociology into the service of the Church have tacitly accepted a naturalistic conception of man. Others have so feared this result that they have assailed both sciences as dangerous. But there have always been on the one hand psychologists and sociologists, and on the other, ministers of religion who have rejected both of these positions and have seen in the new sciences of man valuable allies for the cure of souls and for the problems the Church faces in the community. Today there is a positive development of this alliance; both psychology and sociology are being incorporated into the ministry of the church as techniques, with no concessions to naturalism or secularism.

This has taken the form in the one instance of what we now call pastoral counseling. The Church has always ministered to the individual and the family in their most intimate needs. The minister has been pastor as well as preacher and teacher. This has been, in fact, the focal point of his most effective ministry lending depth, and relevance and understanding to all the rest. But it has been a form of ministry for which there was little guidance beyond use of the traditional formulas of comfort and advice. Nothing, for example, to compare with the Roman Catholic confessional, which has both theological grounding and exact technique. But now pastoral counseling is taking full advantage of knowledge and methods that are being developed by psychology. We are in process of separating the empirically validated and effective techniques from Freudian or any other mythology as regards the soul of man, and putting them at the service of the minister who knows man as a spiritual person created in the image of God and with a destiny in eternity. Both the theoretical and the practical developments of this movement are of immense importance to the usefulness of the Church in an age of tensions, when personal problems are accentuated to the point of desperation.

The importance of sociology is found not alone in the need of the Christian minister for theoretical understanding of the relation between religion and culture and for coping with the constant danger that Christianity may become but a culture religion. It is also and more immediately determined today by the social rootlessness of many people. This is a very practical matter. Technology has radically shifted the basis of group relationships generally. People used to live mainly in the country; now they live in the city, and even those who have homes in rural areas have automobiles, radios and television, and can hardly be thought of as isolated in any sense except spiritually. Spiritual isolation they share with the rest of the population. These conditions are aggravated by the nomadic character of much of the population. People just do not stay put as they once did and the institutions and processes of society, including those of the Church, through which individuals and families could once be understood, and in which they could live their Christian lives, have been so disrupted that the pastor might well be driven to despair. He is like a man preaching to a procession, or trying to minister to the needs of men at a traffic intersection.

Now, in this situation as in all situa-

tions, the Church needs to remember that man is still man and that his basic problems remain even though in distracted forms. It must also rely upon the resources of the Christian faith and the God who seeks men through Christ. It cannot turn over to a secular sociology the solution of the problems of modern men. At the same time it must requisition for the Christian purpose the really scientific knowledge and techniques of sociology. It must throw the light of such knowledge on the scene in which the Church lives, and it must furnish the minister with such techniques as will enable him to make his Christian witness effective. To some degree it can be both map and compass for the ministry of the Church. It is a point of distinct encouragement, therefore, that there is developing what might be called a Christian sociology.

V

The Problem of Unity

Finally, we must take a look at the Ecumenical Movement in this country. America has been an open field for the proliferation of the sect and the denomination. The tendency to division inherent in protestantism has been uninhibited and even encouraged by conditions of life in this country. It is one part of the price we have paid for the rejection of the established Church. All churches are sects in this country. Those which in Europe are state or national Churches are sects here just like the others. Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches in America are denominations among other denominations and in any given community any one of them or all of them may be very small and unimportant groups. Moreover these older Churches with roots in the old world suffer, often very markedly, from the subtle and sometimes not so subtle process of Americanization.

Under these conditions ecumenism inevitably tends to mean something quite different from what it means in Europe or Asia. I can only briefly suggest some of the main aspects of that meaning. For one thing, the ecumenical movement is identified with efforts to overcome the evils in local communities of denominationalism. It means reducing the number of churches in the town. Therefore the forming of federated churches with two or more ties, or "community" churches with no denominational connections, is one obvious line of action. There are many of these local "solutions." Obviously they solve nothing and indeed the real unrelated community church is parochial in outlook. When it becomes loosely connected with other similar churches there is the beginning of a new denomination. On a larger scale ecumenism means to many the organic union of two or more denominations. A number of these unions have been effected especially among bodies with a common background, such as Methodist or Presbyterian.

Again the ecumenical movement means to many functional unity, cooperation through local, state and national councils. It is no longer accurate to speak of the "squabbling among the churches" or of the disgraceful bickering between the sects. By and large the sects and denominations get along not only amicably but quite cooperatively. Most sects recognize the others as Christian, and a great many American church members move with an astonishing ease from Church to Church. There are few Congregational churches, for example, outside New England, in which the majority of members have not been nurtured in some other denomination.

American churches and churchmen, as a rule, are little concerned about most of the things theological, liturgical and ecclesiastical, that are focal issues for the Churches of Europe. In fact, interest of any kind in ecumenism has not touched the lay membership of the Churches or even the great majority of the clergy. On

the other hand there are many evidences of increased emphasis on the denomination and its interests. This is not at all due to reactions against the movement for unity, and it may well be that a sounder ecumenism will be possible when each communion knows more clearly what it means and so can meet others with better understanding in the quest for unity. One of the real obstacles to moves toward unity is the reluctance of churchmen to take seriously either the problems of polity or those of theology. This has been one source of the difficulties and sorrows encountered in our venture toward union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. We Congregationalists have found it hard to believe that problems of polity were real. But we have learned that lesson, and the actual beginnings of the United Church point toward a solution of some of the problems that all denominations of similar polity must confront.

Despite these obstacles of indifference and the increase of denominational consciousness, a serious beginning has been made in study of the problem of unity. This found convincing expression last year at Oberlin. We may be sure that the tide has turned in American Protestantism, and that having exercised to the full our freedom to separate and divide, we shall now be more and more concerned to realize our unity in Christ.

CENTENNIAL

(St. John's Anglican Church, Thamesford, Ontario)

HERE IS our Nazareth.
Here may we grow in grace.
The roof-tree grows a belfry now
Calls "Come" and keeps none out
Save the cold wind.
This, as Thy first home,
Was a stable once
And dwelling fair.
A family lived and loved and gave
Within these walls
Time-grey, smoke brown and tawny rose.
Creaks wide the door
A century now; the hearth
With eucharistic candles gleams.
Their gratitude—this sanctuary.
Hearth-stone, altar throne,
Spiritual home.
God's acre sleeps their dust.
Their souls with ours burn vigil lights,
The windows glow God's message,
Faith beams it on!

STELLA M. OSTLE

RECOMMENDED READING

A list and commentary prepared by THE ASSOCIATES IN READING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY, CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

Primary Selections

Christians and the State by John C. Bennett, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1958, $4.50.

The appearance of a new book from the gifted pen of Prof. John C. Bennett is always an event of major importance to the Christian minister. *Christians and The State* is written with both brevity and clarity and a compelling relevance to the insistent problems of Christian thought in an age when the State is becoming more and more a definitive and decisive factor in the fashioning of the social pattern.

"Political problems have come to be the most fateful social problems," says the author, "and back of the contemporary discussion of these political problems there is the whole history of Christian thought."

Prof. Bennett's discussion of "the vexed problem of the relation of Christian thought to a more broadly-based morality" in the "common moral convictions" of men is simply superb. In the chapter on "Law of the State and the State Under Law," the author within the space of twenty pages discusses Catholic, Protestant and secular thinking about the law of the State and its relation to the law of God, with a completeness and clarity which this reviewer finds unique.

The author's wide-ranging scholarship, healthy realism and Christian idealism are apparent throughout the book.

This book is a must for any minister who seeks to relate the Christian ethical imperative to contemporary society and politics.

Job: Poet of Existence, by Samuel Terrien: Bobbs-Merrill Co., $3.75.

Believing that there is much in man's present awareness that calls for a reappraisal of the Book of Job, Professor Samuel Terrien of Union Theological Seminary offers this provocative interpretation. He takes into account such cultural trends as the growth in depth pyschology, the explorations of modern literature, the questioning of existentialist philosophy, the expression of man's spirit in the arts, and the convictions of the theology of crisis.

Rather than being an attempt to solve the problem of evil or to vindicate God's ways with men, the poet of Job views life without illusion, but not with despair. He deals drastically with "popular" religion. Man's purpose is to find his place in the creative activity of God in the universe.

Endowed with the equipment of a fine Biblical scholar, the author adds to it the richness of his familiarity with the expressions of our contemporary life. The product is a rare opportunity to read toward a richer Biblical knowledge and a deeper understanding of man's smallness and greatness.

Professor Terrien writes that Job "becomes alive with the mover of the world." This is also a possibility for the reader.

Systematic Theology, Volume II, by Paul Tillich, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

The third part of Dr. Tillich's five part, three volume *Systematic Theology* deals with "Existence and the Christ." There can no longer be any question but that this is modern theology that will influence the development of our church thought and practice for all time to come. The minister who gives Dr. Tillich a chance will find that his thought is highly coherent, suggestive and stimulating and that he opens doors that unite our Christian heritage with our modern world. He makes the Christ of our faith relevant to existence today. It is not necessary (though helpful) to have read Volume I, but is easy to predict that if one reads this volume he will turn to Volume I and eagerly await the publication of Volume III.

Theology and Modern Literature, by Amos N. Wilder, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958, $3.00.

Box office attraction makes it easy to forget that the most significant arts of our time deal with moral themes and existential concerns. It is equally difficult to acknowledge that the modern artist fails to find in much of Christian thought a sufficient sense of evil. This book calls for a new theological seriousness wherein the church will discover, through the modern arts, a deeper sensitivity to the evils of the present age, and the price of redemption, the real import of the Cross. If the church can become increasingly hospitable to the work of the modern artist, it will receive insight and courage to re-conceive the Christian ethic, to rise above the meagerness of much of its spiritual life. "The encounter of the Gospel with the world, whether in Evangelism, religious education, apologetics or theology requires a deep appreciation of the varied symbolic expression of culture."

This book acts as a genuine spur toward that appreciation, toward that day when the artist will be honored for exposing the heart of the world desolation; and those who come to the judgment his revelation brings will recognize a common language of the soul.

Secondary Selections

Design for Adult Education in the Church, by Paul Bergevin and John McKinley. Seabury Press, $6.00

When the church's educational ministry encourages adults to discover their concerns, learning takes place. The book presents both the theory and practice of a program of adult Christian education using modern pyschology's insights into group learning. A book that is capable of giving both a new orientation and power to a congregation's life.

Existence Under God, by Albert Edward Day, New York: Abbingdon Press, 1958, $2.50.

Are you searching for a book which warmly affirms that prayer can be presented to your people in a way that is intellectually respectable and decisively Christian? This is the book. With abundant sound illustrations Dr. Day discusses the disciplines essential to the experience of God's presence, an experience which is not merely for the gifted mystic but for all, any time, anywhere.

Stride Toward Freedom, by Martin Luther King, Jr., New York: Harpers, 1958, $2.95.

This is more than the exciting account of the Montgomery, Alabama story, for it has deep implications and challenge for all our Christian social concerns. It is the best treatment of the problem of segregation from a Christian point of view that we know.

Dr. Zhivago, by Boris Pasternak, New York: Pantheon Press, 1958, $5.00.

This novel is of such depth and sensitivity and is already so important in the world of literature that every minister will want to read it. Once started you will find it not a chore, but an experience that deepens and stretches one's soul.

Personal Knowledge, by Michael Polanyi, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, $6.00.

Warning! This is rather heavy going but may prove to be one of the most important books of our time. Gifford lecturer Polanyi is a distinguished British scientist and sociologist. The sub-title, "Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy" is more than carried out by the amazing scope of the book. Perhaps no book since Abbe Dimnet's "Art of Thinking" speaks more to its day after the nature of knowledge. In addition we gain a glimpse of the modern scientific mind and method.

Spirit, Son and Father, (Christian Faith in the Light of the Holy Spirit), by Henry P. VanDusen, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1958, $3.50.

Written by the president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, this is a significant book. Dr. VanDusen is concerned with the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology and with the profound importance the doctrine of the Spirit has for all of the great convictions of Christian faith.

He writes with the clear conviction that at the heart of vital dynamic Christian experience and Christian proclamation, there is the Holy Spirit.

Of the Renewal of the Church, by W. A. Visser't Hooft, The Ryerson Press, 1956.

From his point of vantage as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Visser't Hooft describes the need of the churches today for

"renewal" rather than "reformation." He calls each Christian to remember the divine origin and nature of the church, to examine in an attitude of repentance those factors which today keep the church from its true purposes and to return to the injunction of our Lord, "to lose our life (as churches) in order to save it." A brief pointed and helpful analysis which, though not new, is nonetheless relevant.

Love and Conflict, by Gibson Winter, New York: Doubleday, 1958, $3.50.

Not only is "love here to stay" but "family life is gaining rather than losing importance." The author, an ordained minister, chaplain, Harvard Ph.D., joined with others in founding, near Detroit, a center for evaluating Christianity's impact on daily life. Out of this varied background he covers many areas including the uprooted family, the separated individual, etc. Although the minister will not find a pat answer to all of life's problems in this book, he will at least be more aware of the problems his parish is facing. A stimulating book to read.

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